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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000695

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF, AF/W, AF/RA AND AF/E
DEPT ALSO PASS TO JEFF MILLINGTON, OFFICE OF SUDAN SPECIAL
ENVOY
LONDON, PARIS, ROME, OSLO FOR AFRICA WATCHERS
CAIRO FOR MAXSTADT
NSC FOR FRAZER AND MILLER
DIA FOR J.GERHARD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#) [SU](#) [BY](#) [ZI](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NSA MOHAMMED ON NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter; Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was delayed in transmission, but contains information that may be of value to end-users.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador Jeter and NSA Mohammed February 6 discussed the Ikeja cantonment tragedy and Nigeria's request for large-scale EOD assistance. Mohammed also briefed the Ambassador on measures taken in northern Nigeria to forestall reprisals in the wake of the Yoruba-Hausa ethnic clashes in Lagos. The two also discussed various regional conflicts. On Sudan, Ambassador Jeter informed the NSA about Senator Danforth's efforts to obtain the agreement of Bashir and Garang to our proposed four confidence building measures; for his part, Mohammed said that Nigeria was content with its current behind-the-scenes role of nudging the parties toward dialogue, whatever the forum. On DROC, Mohammed thought the key to progress was to get Kabila, Bemba, and Onusumba to talk, implying he did not think the Inter-Congolese Dialogue would yield much fruit without these three reaching an understanding. Mohammed stated Nigeria was deeply concerned about Zimbabwe and that an avenue for a graceful Mugabe exit was needed. Closer to home, Sierra Leone was on the mend with the official declaration of the war's end. Meanwhile, Charles Taylor, because of his own internal problems, was being less of a problem elsewhere in the region. END SUMMARY.

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IKEJA AND LAGOS
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[1](#)3. (C) After discussing the Ikeja explosion and President Obasanjo's special appeal for assistance, Nigerian National Security Advisor, retired LTG Aliyu Mohammed expressed his concern about the ammunition depot in his hometown, Gusau (Zamfara State). He said the depot had been there for years, and the town grew around the site as the population expanded. Now, instead of being on the outskirts, the depot was practically in the middle of the state capital. He voiced interest in an EOD support team assessing all munitions facilities in Nigeria. (COMMENT: Such assessment visits are now incorporated into the overall support concept of our EOD assistance to Nigeria. END COMMENT.)

[1](#)4. (C) When Ambassador Jeter expressed concern that the Yoruba-Hausa conflict in Lagos could spark reprisal attacks in the North, Mohammed retorted that the GON had enlisted the support of Northern governors and traditional leaders to do their statesmen-like best to make certain that there were no violent repercussions in the North, as had happened in the past. Additionally, the police were being visibly deployed in strategic locations to deter incitement of violence.

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POLICE TRAINING
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[1](#)5. (C) NSA Mohammed was grateful when the Ambassador informed him the Embassy would begin a police-training program including curricula development, a centralized criminal database and the placement of a U.S. advisor in Police Headquarters. He volunteered to inform the President immediately.

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FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

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16. (C) SUDAN: After stressing that our policy was not to create another peace initiative in competition with IGAD or the Egyptian initiative, Ambassador Jeter told Mohammed about Special Envoy Danforth's January trip to the area and the progress made, particularly on the Nuba mountains cease-fire.

Mohammed thought that maintenance and expansion of the ceasefire was critical. After its plans to host an all-Sudanese conference were aborted late last year, Nigeria had been content with limiting its efforts to encouraging all parties to communicate. Mohammed informed us that Tripoli was trying to become more active in promoting the Egypt-Libya Initiative (ELI). Tripoli had called a March /April meeting on Sudan and had invited Nigeria to be an observer. The NSA extended an invitation to Senator Danforth to visit Abuja on any future trips to Africa.

17. (C) DROC: Mohammed said Nigeria continued to encourage Osunumba and Bemba to meet Kabila. However, they continued to balk at any venue where Kabila was accorded the status of Head of State. They felt this gave Kabila an undeserved aura of legitimacy when, in fact, he was handed power only because of his father's demise. Since Kabila was not democratically elected and because he controlled less than half the national territory, Kabila should be treated as one of three equal faction leaders.

18. (C) ZIMBABWE: Mohammed expressed strong concern about Zimbabwe. He revealed that Obasanjo had hosted MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai for two days in Abuja prior to the President's late January trip to Harare. When President Obasanjo met with Mugabe, according to the NSA, Obasanjo recommended that Mugabe consider retirement. However, Mugabe responded that he was committed to run, having passed the point of no return with regard to keeping his word to his followers. Mugabe said that he could only consider retiring after winning the election. Mohammed opined that Mugabe was old and that part of him wanted to leave politics, but the other part feared his vulnerability to prosecution by his opponents should he leave the Presidency. Moreover, Mugabe and his henchmen were profiting from trade in Congolese diamonds due to his close relationship with Kabila. This lucrative interest would likely die once Mugabe left high office. While eventually Mugabe must go, Mohammed wondered how the MDC could govern if it came to power in the short term. "All of the government structures in Zimbabwe," including the police and security services, were "100 percent ZANU-PF," implying that any MDC government could be paralyzed by a disloyal civil service and security apparatus.

19. (C) LIBERIA: "We don't trust Taylor," Mohammed said. If the Liberian President had his druthers, he would try to sate his large appetite for power at the expense of his neighbors. However, Taylor has to think small now due to the pressures on him. Worried about the LURD and afraid of being labeled a terrorist supporter in the aftermath of September 11, Taylor was trying to convince the world that he was reforming, to preempt further international pressure and isolation.

110. (C) Mohammed also had no compliments for Burkina Faso's Blaise Campaore. While Campaore had invited some of Taylor's political opposition to set up shop in Burkina, the NSA did not believe Campaore had broken from Taylor. Nigeria continued to support holding an ECOWAS-sponsored Liberian reconciliation meeting in Abuja as soon as this could be arranged.

Jeter